Cambodia



Population 17.8 million · Latest figures: 2025

The National Police received 1,136 complaints from Cambodian citizens about online scams in 2025, involving about US$4.7 million (KHR 18.9 billion). By 24 September 2026, 51 of those complaints had been resolved. In the first eight months of 2026 the police had already taken 1,084 further complaints, involving about US$21.5 million, of which 42 had been resolved. Losses named in the complaints are running far ahead of 2025. The interior minister, in February 2026, put what Cambodian citizens lost to domestic online scams in 2025 at more than US$45 million, with less than US$20 million of that recovered.

Prime Minister Hun Manet chairs the Commission for Combating Online Scams, which he set up in February 2025 so that the interior, defence, justice, foreign affairs and economy ministries, the police and the armed forces act under one command. The Law on Combating Online Scams took effect on 7 April 2026. It creates offences for the scam itself, for running a scam centre, for recruiting or training people to take part, for collecting identity documents in order to open accounts, and for laundering the proceeds. Prison terms run from two years for a scam to life imprisonment where a centre's operation causes a death, and a court can freeze accounts and seize the premises. In September 2026 the prime minister said a cybersecurity law and a cybercrime law were still being prepared.

PEOPLE SCAMMED

958,789

8.3% of adults

Cambodian citizens are being hit, as well as people abroad. National Police Commissioner Sar Theth said in September 2026 that Cambodia is a base for operations aimed at foreigners and, at the same time, a place with a growing number of local victims on the police complaint file. The prime minister said that as the large compounds are broken up, syndicates are splitting into smaller groups that target people in Cambodia.

The interior minister has described the scripts used at home. A caller pretends to work for a bank or a microfinance firm and talks about a prize that has to be paid for first. Others take an online order, demand the money up front, and disappear. Some pressure a person into sharing intimate images and then demand payment. Others build a supposed emotional relationship and ask for large sums. He said the shame attached to these crimes has driven some victims to suicide. The telecoms ministry has warned about love scams, false job offers, fake prizes and harmful links.

The compounds sat above all in Phnom Penh, Preah Sihanouk, Svay Rieng and Banteay Meanchey in the first half of 2026. By September 2026 the commission's secretariat said the large compounds had been taken, and that what remained was work from rented rooms, guesthouses, flats, houses and coffee shops. Sar Theth said the people arrested are mostly the lower-level operators, because the leadership of the major networks stays abroad.

PEOPLE WHO LOST MONEY

681,102

71% of victims

The money leaves as a transfer into an account the scammer controls. In the complaints the interior minister described in November 2025, more than US$800,000 had moved from victims straight into accounts held by the criminals. The usual approach is a call from someone pretending to be a bank or microfinance officer, a prize that has to be paid for in advance, a cheap online purchase that never arrives, or a withdrawal from an account the scammer has got into.

Stopping the payment depends on the bank and the police acting while the money is still there. On 24 November 2025 the interior minister told his departments to work with the banks and the microfinance institutions as soon as a complaint arrives, including at the weekend, and to ask for the account to be frozen before the funds are moved. The 2026 law lets judicial police seek a suspension or a freeze, and the court rules on the seizure or freeze within 48 hours. The account holder can appeal.

A second gate is the phone number tied to the account. On 10 December 2025 the National Bank of Cambodia and the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications agreed to match each SIM card to the bank or payment account that uses it. The campaign opened on 17 June 2026. The telecoms minister said it is meant to find cards with no clear owner and to stop them being used inside the banking system. The central bank governor said the check protects one-time passwords and accounts, and is aimed at fraud arranged over social media.

MONEY LOST

US$20.7m

KHR 82.95b in a year, 0.04% of GDP

What comes back to people in Cambodia is a fraction of what officials say was taken. In February 2026 the interior minister said citizens lost more than US$45 million to domestic online scams in 2025, and that less than US$20 million of it had been recovered, the rest permanently lost. On the police complaint file the sums are smaller: of 1,136 complaints in 2025, involving about US$4.7 million, 51 had been resolved by 24 September 2026.

The large freezes sit on the compound cases, not on that complaint file. From July 2025 to 31 August 2026 the commission's secretariat reported more than US$300 million frozen in bank accounts linked to online scam crimes, with other assets still being valued. Eighteen casino licences were revoked and nine suspended. By 31 October 2026 the commission was still reporting more than US$300 million frozen, plus movable and immovable property worth hundreds of millions of dollars, now in confiscation proceedings. Eighteen licences linked to the Prince Group network had been revoked, and another ten suspended.

The law treats property whose owner cannot show a lawful origin, where it is suspected of coming from these scams, as money laundering. A court can confiscate the building used as a centre and can close the bank accounts, websites and social media profiles used in the scam. A person who took part only because they were forced is not held criminally liable.

MONEY RETURNED

US$647,741

3.1% of the money lost

US$647,741 (KHR 2.6b) of it was returned to victims, 3.1% of the money lost.

REPORTED

75%

of victims reported it

In 2025 the National Police received 1,136 complaints from Cambodian citizens about online scams, involving about US$4.7 million. By 24 September 2026, 51 of them had been resolved. Over the first eight months of 2026 the police received 1,084 complaints, involving about US$21.5 million, and 42 of those had been resolved. The 2026 complaints were already close to the whole of 2025, and the money named in them was more than four times the 2025 total.

The complaints go to the police. The National Police keeps a scam complaint desk. After a report is received, the police contact the complainant, who can still be required to appear. A false report is itself an offence. In November 2025 the interior ministry had about 200 recent complaints of phone and social media fraud, with more than US$800,000 moved into the criminals' accounts, and officers were told to ask banks and microfinance institutions to freeze an account as soon as a complaint arrived.

The commission that raids compounds counts something else: locations searched, people charged, and money frozen in suspect accounts. From July 2025 to 31 August 2026 that freeze stood at more than US$300 million, across 446 cases sent to court. Those figures sit beside the police file of Cambodian victims. The two meet when a citizen complaint leads the police to ask a bank to hold an account, which the 2026 law puts before a court within 48 hours.

POLICE RECORDS

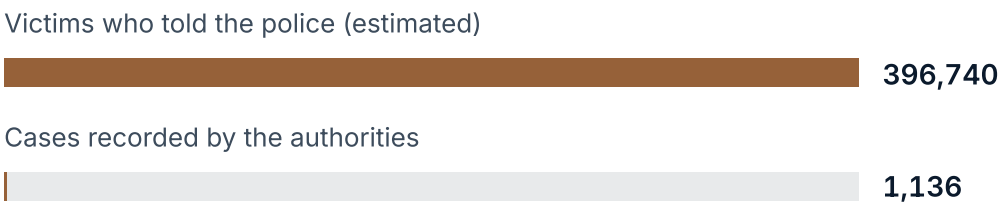
1,136

cases recorded by the authorities

The figure shown here is 1,136 online scam complaints from Cambodian citizens received by the National Police in 2025, with about US$4.7 million lost, entered as KHR 18,863,135,589. It is the commissioner's count of complaints from people in Cambodia for that calendar year. The crackdown on scam compounds is counted separately, in locations, suspects and frozen accounts.

From July 2025 to 31 August 2026 the commission inspected 832 suspected locations and took 86 major compounds under official control. It sent 446 cases to court against 3,927 accused people, detained nearly 30,000 suspects and sent more than 22,000 foreign nationals home. Four cases covered 15 officials, among them a deputy prosecutor and a deputy Phnom Penh police chief. By 31 October 2026 the same campaign stood at 972 locations, 568 case files, 5,032 people indicted and held before trial, and 23,760 foreign nationals sent home.

The Law on Combating Online Scams has been in force since 7 April 2026. A scam carries two to five years, or five to ten if an organised group is behind it or many people are hit. Running a centre carries five to ten years, ten to twenty with violence, confinement or trafficking, and 15 to 30 years or life if someone dies. In the first half of 2026 the interior ministry opened 85 money-laundering investigations tied to these cases, 79 of them in Svay Rieng. Those arrested are mostly the lower level, because the leaders remain abroad.



MOST COMMON

1. Online shopping
2. Jobs
3. Investment

Officials describe two clusters. One hits people in Cambodia. The other is the compound industry, built to deceive people by phone and online, much of it aimed abroad and now breaking into smaller groups at home.

At home, the interior minister has named bank impersonation: a caller pretends to work for a bank or a microfinance firm and uses a prize as the reason for a payment. In February 2026 he also named blackmail with intimate images, and approaches that exploit a supposed relationship. In November 2025 he added cheap online goods that are paid for and never arrive, and money taken from an account the victim did not authorise. The telecoms ministry has warned about love scams, false job offers, fake prizes and harmful links. The police gave the 1,136 complaints for 2025 as one total.

The compound is an organised floor, often behind a casino licence. In the first half of 2026 the interior ministry said it had dismantled 478 such locations: 139 in Phnom Penh, 124 in Preah Sihanouk, 79 in Svay Rieng and 54 in Banteay Meanchey. The commission says the large sites have been taken, and that the work now runs in small groups from rented rooms, guesthouses and coffee shops. The interior ministry said some of the people still doing this work are Cambodians released from compounds that had been closed. By 31 October 2026, eighteen casino licences linked to the Prince Group had been revoked, and another ten suspended. Sar Theth said the leaders remain abroad.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Since February 2025 the prime minister has chaired the Commission for Combating Online Scams. The interior, defence, justice, foreign affairs and economy ministers are vice-chairs, and Senior Minister Chhay Sinarith's secretariat runs the raids. Since 17 June 2026 the central bank and the telecoms ministry match SIM cards to bank accounts. The Law on Combating Online Scams, in force since 7 April 2026, lets judicial police ask for a freeze, and the court rules within 48 hours. Owners and managers were fined 7.736 billion riel in the first half of 2026 under a sub-decree on foreigners in residential premises.

The raids and the complaints from citizens have not moved together. By 31 August 2026, 86 major compounds were under official control and more than US$300 million was frozen, and the secretariat said no large compound remained. By 31 October, 972 locations had been acted on and 5,032 people indicted, with more than US$300 million still frozen. Citizen complaints were 1,136 in 2025, about US$4.7 million, and 1,084 to August 2026, about US$21.5 million. Recovered money for citizens was less than US$20 million, against more than US$45 million lost in 2025.

Smaller groups work from rented rooms and guesthouses. The interior spokesman said some Cambodians released from closed compounds now commit the fraud themselves. The police commissioner said the leaders stay abroad. Complaints from people in Cambodia, and the recovery on their losses, have not moved with those seizures.

Calculation Methodology & Sources

People scammed

- 8.3%. Where reliable survey data is not available, we estimate using mobile and broadband penetration.
- 8.3% of 11,585,033 adults.

People who lost money

- 71.0%. Where reliable survey data is not available, we estimate using mobile and broadband penetration.

Money lost

- KHR 18.86b was lost in cases recorded by the authorities. Adding the 679,966 victims who lost money but are not in those records, at KHR 94,243 each, gives KHR 82.95b.
- Price of an unrecorded loss: Read off the line fitted to GDP per person in the countries where this price is measured (Canada, Chile, Mexico, Singapore and United States): US$23.48 = KHR 94,243.13.
- US dollars at 0.000249163 per KHR.
- Share of GDP: US$20.7m against GDP of US$51.27b in 2025. World Bank, GDP (current US$) 2025.

Money returned

- Estimated: the median share of money recovered in lower-middle-income countries that publish it: Bangladesh (1.1%), Egypt (7.6%), India (4.3%), Nigeria (0.3%), the Philippines (6.6%), Pakistan (6.2%), Tanzania (0.5%) and Vietnam (2.0%).

Reported

- Borrowed from Indonesia, India, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam: 75.0%. The median of the shares measured by the non-government survey: Indonesia (48.0%), India (87.9%), Malaysia (55.2%), the Philippines (76.9%), Singapore (87.1%), Thailand (75.0%) and Vietnam (65.2%).

Police records

- Borrowed from Indonesia, India, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam: 41.4%. The median of the shares measured by the non-government survey: Indonesia (28.0%), India (53.4%), Malaysia (41.4%), the Philippines (13.5%), Singapore (54.8%), Thailand (45.8%) and Vietnam (39.4%).
- 1,136: Online scam cases recorded by the National Police.

Most common

- Borrowed from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam: ranked by the average of the scam types their victims named (no survey of Cambodia's own). 34.2% of answers are methods such as phishing, or other, and are not ranked.

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